

Message Text

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ACTION DHA-02

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USIA FOR ILA, IOP/M

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, UY
SUBJECT: REACTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS CONTROVERSY

1. SUMMARY: HUMAN RIGHTS-RELATED EVENTS IN GENEVA AND IN THIS
HEMISPHERE HAVE BROUGHT RENEWED, INTENSE AND CRITICAL MEDIA
ATTENTION TO THE U.S. THAT ATTENTION, WHICH HAD SUBSIDED FOLLOWING
THE GOU'S INITIAL REACTION TO SECRETARY VANCE'S STATEMENT OF
FEBRUARY 24, PROBABLY WILL BE MAINTAINED FOR SOME DAYS AND CAN BE
EXPECTED TO BECOME EVEN MORE CRITICAL WHEN THE DEPARTMENT'S
REPORT TO THE CONGRESS ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN URUGUAY IS
MADE PUBLIC.
END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER THE INITIAL FLURRY OF PUBLICITY REFLECTING
GOU OUTRAGE OVER THE SECRETARY'S HAVING SINGLED OUT URUGUAY
TOGETHER WITH ARGENTINA AND ETHIOPIA FOR PUBLIC JUDGMENT,
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MEDIA COVERAGE WAS REDUCED, PRESUMABLY PROMPTED BY THE
CONCILIATORY TONE SUBSEQUENTLY TAKEN BY FONMIN ROVIRA
(MVD 876). NEVERTHELESS, CONTINUED INTENSE CONCERN OVER
THE ISSUE WAS REFLECTED IN BROAD COVERAGE GIVEN TO EVENTS,
FIRST IN ARGENTINA AND THEN IN BRAZIL.

3. THE THRUST OF MEDIA COVERAGE AND ATTENTION CHANGED

SUBSTANTIALLY ON MARCH 8 AS A RESULT OF OUR VOTE IN GENEVA, THE TYSON STATEMENT AND ITS DISAVOWAL BY WASHINGTON. THESE EVENTS GENERATED NEW HEADLINES AND, AFTER THE INITIAL IMPACT, EVEN MORE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE STARTING ON THE EVENING OF MARCH 9 WHEN EL DIARIO HEADLINES READ "CARTER ALLIES HIMSELF IN THE UN WITH THE USSR, CUBA AND THE RED BLOC." A TWO PAGE SPREAD INSIDE CARRIED STORIES ON DETERIORATING RELATIONS AND/OR TENSIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, CHILE AND NICARAGUA. THIS MORNINGS' PRESS FOLLOWED MUCH THE SAME PATTERN AND INCLUDED REFERENCES TO TYSON'S INCLUSION OF COMMENTS ON URUGUAY IN STATEMENT ON THE CHILE VOTE AND TO THE U.S. HAVING OPENED CUBA, NORTH KOREA, VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA TO U.S. TRAVELERS. THERE WAS ALSO CONSIDERABLE COMMENT RE THE ANTICIPATED TESTIMONY OF FORMER PRO-TUPAMARO SENATOR ERRO IN GENEVA. CONDEMNATION OF ERRO WAS UNANIMOUS WITH EVEN THE MODERATE OPPOSITION EL DAI EDITORIALY CLASSIFYING ERRO AND "OTHERS LIKE HIM...WHO WERE SILENT, PLEASED OR OPENLY HAPPY IN THE TIMES WHEN URUGUAY WAS BEING RAZED BY AN EVIL CAPABLE OF KIDNAPPING, VEXING AND ASSASSINATING THE DEFENSELESS" AS "ENEMIES OF THE RIGHTS THEY INVOKE."

4. THE GOU CHARGES OF U.S. INTERVENTION IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS ALSO CAME BACK INTO PUBLIC FOCUS IN PRESS REPORTS ON FONMIN ROVIRA'S MARCH 9 MEETING WITH THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE TO DISCUSS U.S.-URUGUAYAN RELATIONS. WHILE REPORTS VARY SLIGHTLY, THE COMMITTEE APPARENTLY TEMPORARILY SIDE-TRACKED A RESOLUTION WHICH WOULD HAVE PUT THE COUNCIL ON RECORD AS ENDORSING THE EXECUTIVE'S STATEMENTS VIS-A-VIS THE UNITED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STATES "INTERVENTION".

5. EVENTS OF RECENT DAYS PRESUMABLY GIVE SIE TO A FEW MORE DAYS OF INTENSE ATTENTION TO THE SUBJECT AND TO PROBABLE CRITICAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE U.S., ATTITUDES LIKELY TO BE EXACERBATED WHEN THE DEPARTMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT TO THE CONGRESS (STATE 52422) IS MADE PUBLIC AND HITS THE PRESS. SIRACUSA

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